

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Status of the Application

Prior to the entry of this amendment, claims 1-23 were pending in this application. The Office Action objected to the drawings, the Abstract and claims 1, 4, 6, 16, 17 and 20. Further, the Office Action rejected claims 3, 5, 6 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 second paragraph as being indefinite, rejected claims 1-6 and 17-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,776,111 to Vance ("Vance"), rejected claims 1, 4-6, 8-11, 13, 15 and 17-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(f) as being anticipated U.S. Patent Application No. 2005/0167159 to Bailey *et al.* and rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vance. Finally, the Office Action found that claims 12, 14 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the relevant base claim and any intervening claims.

The present amendment amends claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15 and 20 and cancels claims 4, 8, 16-19, 22 and 23. Therefore, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 20 and 21 are presented for examination in this amendment. No new matter is added by the amendments to the claims. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application as amended. -

Formality Objections

In response to the formality objections contained in the Office Action, Applicant has provided a replacement drawing sheet, amended the Abstract and amended the objected to claims that have not been canceled in this Amendment in compliance with the Office Action.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejections

In response to the formality rejections under section 112, Applicant has amended the rejected claims that have not been canceled in this Amendment in compliance with the greatly appreciated suggestions provided in the Office Action.

35 U.S.C. §102 & 103 Rejections

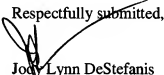
In the Office Action dependent claims 8 and 22 were not rejected as either being anticipated by or unpatentable over Vance. Instead, claims 8 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(f) as being anticipated by Bailey. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the priority date of the present application is December 21, 2002, a priority date that is earlier than the priority date of Bailey, which has a priority date of December 31, 2003. Therefore, Applicants submit that Bailey is not prior art with respect to the present application. As such, without consideration of the merits of the rejections of independent claims 1 and 20, Applicants have amended the independent claims to include the limitations of claims 8 and 22, respectively. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 20 as amended are not anticipated by and are patentable over the Vance reference. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims depending from independent claims 1 and 20 are also patentable over Vance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

In the event that a fee or refund is due in connection with this Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No 19-0615. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at (617) 768-2269.

Respectfully submitted,


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